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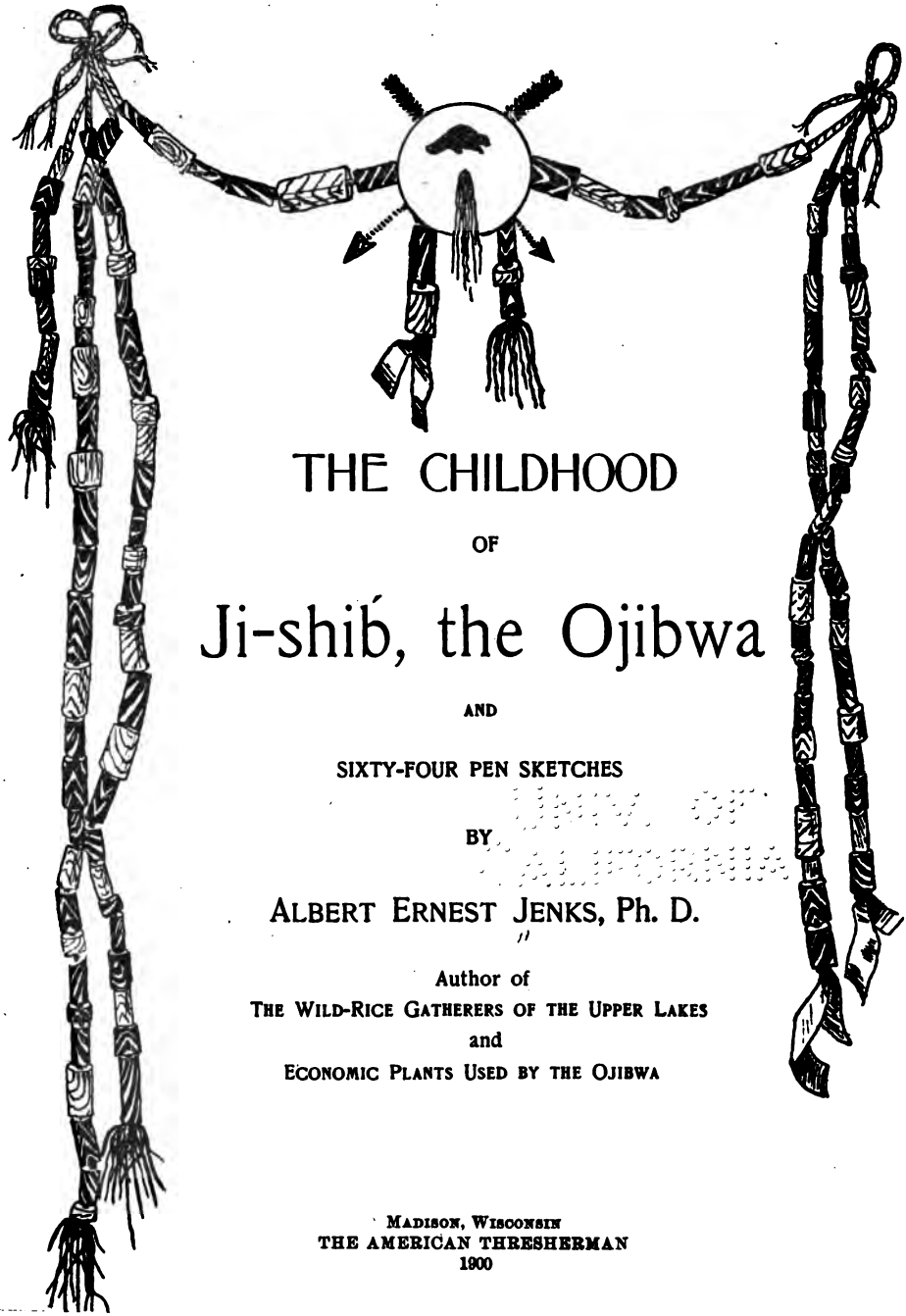
Childhood of Ji-shib'

"Then Ji-shib′ . . . drew his knife . . . and . . . waited his chance to strike."—*Page* 121.

By JAMES R. STUART, Madison, Wisconsin.



THE CHILDHOOD

OF

Ji-shiḃ, the Ojibwa

AND

SIXTY-FOUR PEN SKETCHES

BY

ALBERT ERNEST JENKS, Ph. D.

Author of

THE WILD-RICE GATHERERS OF THE UPPER LAKES

and

ECONOMIC PLANTS USED BY THE OJIBWA

MADISON, WISCONSIN
THE AMERICAN THRESHERMAN
1900

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First
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November
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Second
Edition
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TO MAIL
ANYWHERE

Press of M. J. CANTWELL
Madison, Wisconsin

This Book is dedicated to half a dozen groups of Little People — most of whom are White, but some are Black and some are Red — who live in the four States bordering on Lake Michigan. Their acquaintance has been, not alone one of my pleasantest recreations, but also one of my most profitable Nature Studies.

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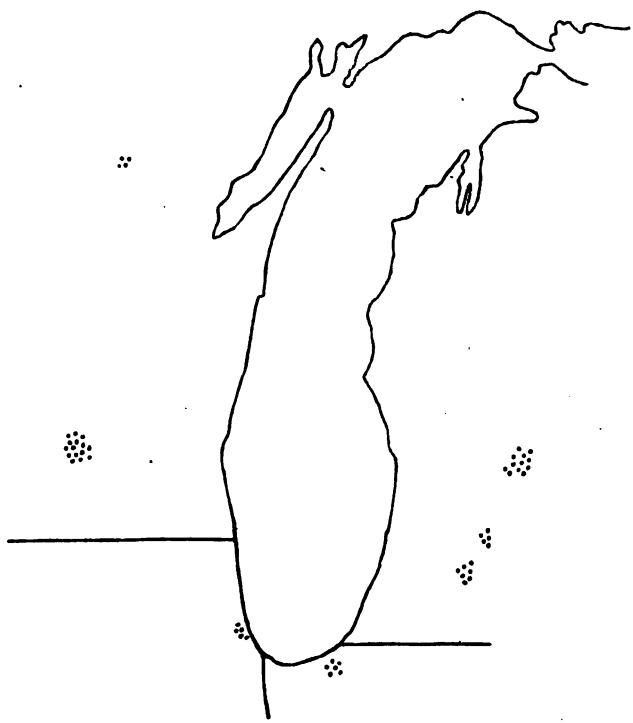

Words to the Reader:

Members of the Ojibwa tribe of Indians are today most commonly called "Chippewa." The old men of the tribe will tell you, however, that the word Chippewa is a corruption of their true tribal name "Ojibwa." Through the efforts of Scientists this latter term is gradually coming in use again.

Ojibwa Indians would not understand you, if you pronounced "Ji-shiḃ" as it is spelled, for they pronounce it "She-sheeḃ."

The World of Things does not mean to the Indian what it means to us. It is difficult, almost impossible, for him to differentiate himself from the other, so-called, lower animals. He and they both had the

same ancestors long, long ago. One myth says, "Many, many Winters ago there were many buffalo; after four days a part of the buffalo turned to Indians." In some things the Indian believes himself superior to the other animals, while in many things he as truly believes himself inferior to them.

The following is a true story, that is, it is all true to the Ojibwa child, — he believes it. The story is written with no other thought than to have constantly in mind what the Ojibwa child believes about the events of his everyday life as given in the story. And the following incidents are taken directly from the common life of the tribe.

ALBERT ERNEST JENKS.

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
OCTOBER 25, 1900.

INTRODUCTION

For ages before the White Man came, America was the home of the Red Man; and the Red Man and his kindred lived in closer touch with nature than his pale-face follower dreams.

When the White Man came there were more than a thousand tribes of Red Men in America, and they spoke about a hundred different languages, each more unlike the others than the English is unlike the Russian. The largest linguistic family lived about the St. Lawrence river and the Great Lakes, and pushed over the plains southward to Tennessee, northward to Hudson bay, and westward to the Rocky mountains in Canada. They are known as the Algonquian family. In early times there were

many tribes and some confederacies in this family; one of the largest tribes was the Ojibwa, or Chippewa, whose descendants still live in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Canada.

Before they learned the White Man's faith, all Indians were nearly alike in belief; they all believed in animal gods, and they all believed that the ancient animals were larger and stronger than those now living. Some of the Red Men believed that the world was created by a Great Ancient Muskrat; and if asked why, they would say, "Even the little muskrat of today adds to the world by building his house of mud and grass." Others believed that the Great Ancient Beaver was the world-maker; for does not his little grandson build dams and make great meadows? So the Red Men held the animals sacred; when they killed one they made a sacrifice to its kind; and they imputed to all the animals, and to all things that reminded them of animals, all sorts of mysterious powers. Among some tribes even now, each person, and especially each warrior, is supposed to have his own particular animal tutelary or guardian, which

he calls his Totem; he believes that this animal god aids him and protects him in all his comings and goings; he wears or carries a symbol of this mysterious guardian as a fetish; and he may even take the name by which the animal is known in his language.

It was partly because of their worship of animals, partly because of their simple modes of living, that the Red Men stood so close to nature. Their eyes were trained to see the animals of woodland and prairie, their ears were trained to catch the sounds of the forest, and their minds were trained to dwell on those natural sights and sounds; and when they spoke it was usually on these simple subjects.

The lives of the simple-minded and nature-loving natives of America are full of interest. Longfellow realized this when he wrote "Hiawatha;" so did J. Fennimore Cooper in "The Deerslayer" and other romances — and his knowledge of the character of the Indian was excellent. And now comes Dr. Jenks with a story of a Red Child, in which he displays deep insight into Indian character, and describes the Red

Child as that interesting person might have described himself in his own wigwam and to his own grandchildren in the evening of his life. May many White Children read the story and learn therein of our Passing Race!

W. J. McGEE,
Ethnologist-in-Charge,
Bureau of American Ethnology,
Washington, D. C.,
September 27, 1900.

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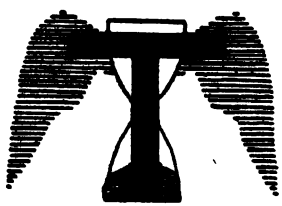
CHAPTER ONE

In Which Ji-shib́ Is Born

I



TWO hundred and fifty years ago a fat little scamp of a beaver was swimming around in Chippeway river in northern Wisconsin. First he swam a few feet with his head above the water, then he dropped his head out of sight and rested it on his short neck and swam a little distance with only his broad flat tail lying on the surface of the river—"looking like a mud-turtle," he said to himself. Presently he took a long deep breath, and rising high in the water, kicked out with all his feet and tried to run on top of the river, but he looked like a lame, short-eared rabbit hopping on the lawn.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Childhood of Ji-shib'

This was the most fun A-mí-kons, the little beaver, had ever had, for during the night the ice had broken up in the river and had nearly all vanished by morning. "It's all water," he said, "here in the middle, down at the bottom, and on top."

He dived down to the soft black mud at the bottom of the river and caught up both his paws full. Next he sat down on his nice fat tail and watched the river steal the mud out of his paws as he held them up, steal it from him and float it away and away like a little cloud until it vanished.

But as that was the very thing he had been doing so often all Winter long, he began to wonder whether it really was all water, especially on the top where he had many times bumped his head. Up he jumped, and kicked with his feet and with his tail, and before he knew it he had jumped himself nearly all out of the water. "Of course it's all water, I knew it was," he said; and then he lay over on his side and floated slowly down stream—lay there and floated along like a baby on a pillow.

He opened his sharp little eyes to look around him. With one eye he saw some tiny fishes under him, and with the other he looked at his Great Father, the Sun. First thing he knew he winked at his Father. A-mí-kons could not explain why he thought so, but he soon began to feel that there was a joke on somebody, and he actually smiled. He slyly looked up at the Sun, but the Sun was smiling too, and maybe, yes, sir, maybe he winked at the little beaver.

The water was so soft on top, and the air above the water so warm and gentle and fragrant that A-mí-kons could not lie still another minute. He shut both his eyes tight, and kicked, and kicked. "How fast I am going," he said, when suddenly — *bum-m-m-mmm !!* "O dear me," A-mí-kons said half aloud, "what is this dreadful noise? O my nose! Perhaps the water is hard on top after all! O dear! O dear!" and the little beaver almost cried out loud.

Just then two tears came into his closed eyes. "A-mí-kons, let us out," they pleaded, "let us out quick, A-mí-kons;" and to please them the good little beaver

opened his eyes, and there, right by his nose, was one of the posts of the great beaver dam which his father and mother and his aunts and uncles and everyone who lived in the beaver village had built the Fall before. That seemed a very long time ago, for ever since then, until that very morning, the top of the water had been hard, and the only places he could go were just in the water, and down at the bottom of the river to play in the mud, and all around through the beaver house—into every room and out again.

Thus thinking of the long sunless Winter which was ended, A-mí-kons crawled up the post against which he had bumped himself, and lay down on top of the dam to think and feel his nose. Each time that A-mí-kons bumped his nose he liked to feel it every few minutes to see whether it still hurt.

My, how his nose hurt when he touched it! As he lay there combing the water from his fur with his hind feet the soft sweet air whispered in his ears, "I am Seegwung, I am the Spring." A-mí-kons looked up and again smiled at the

Sun, and the Sun looked down on him and touched him gently and said, "I am Seegwung, I am the Spring." A-mí-kons felt his own little heart breathe, and soon he heard it lisping, "I am Seegwung, I am the Spring," and he touched his nose and it did not hurt at all.

He leaned out over the edge of the post to look at his face in the water to see whether his nose was swollen — when all at once a shadow flitted under him, and he looked up. There, poised in the air like a humming-bird before a flower, he saw O-gish-ke-mun-ne-sa, the king-fisher. Suddenly the kingfisher dropped toward the water until he was not higher than a wild plum tree, and there he poised again and turned his head to one side and peered into the water looking for little fishes. Down he dropped again, making the water splash as he dived into it, and caught a minnow for his breakfast. When A-mí-kons saw that the kingfisher flew away again and was not injured the little skeptic caught himself saying, "Of course it's all water, I knew it was."

Just then five large swans, or some things like swans, came around the bend of the river above him and swam silently and swiftly toward the dam. "Tang-g-g-gh! whshshshsh!" something shrieked, and A-mí-kons instinctively dodged his chubby head. Before he could say "Jack Robinson" the post was nearly knocked from under him and he felt himself being pulled under the water by his tail. Presently he knew that his mother was talking to him through her teeth still holding his tail in her mouth and dragging him away. "Don't you know an Indian when you see him?" she said. They stopped underneath the dam with their heads out of the water where they might breathe and look out through the sticks without being seen by the Indians.

One of the swans, which were really birch-bark canoes, came toward them, and an Indian in the canoe pulled his arrow out of the post on which A-mí-kons had been lying. All of the canoes were paddled to the shore above the dam, and the number of Indians and Squaws

and children and dogs which jumped on shore all at once was frightful. The dogs barked and rolled and stretched and ran about, and every one talked and laughed all the time.

Soon they began to unload their canoes and carry their bundles around the end of the beaver dam below the shallow water and the stones. Even the little girls carried something — a pet puppy, or a small bundle wrapped up in a deer skin, or anything that they could lug. There were a great many buffalo robes, and moose skins, and elk skins, and packs of warm soft beaver furs for Winter clothing. There were in all about sixty sacks of what the Indians call pemmican, which is dried buffalo meat torn in small pieces, pounded fine, and packed in a bag made of buffalo skin. After it is packed in the bag some buffalo fat is melted and poured over the meat, and sometimes they mix in dried huckleberries too. An Indian prefers pemmican to almost anything else for Winter food. It certainly is good, and the berries in it make it taste rather like a nice Thanksgiving pudding.

One of the Indians took a small moose skin and tied the four corners together, like the corners of a handkerchief, and hung this moose-skin bag over his arm. He reached into his canoe and took from it half a dozen whimpering little puppies, and put them in the bag. They were all blind yet except two, and all of them were mostly legs. Next he stooped down, and, fastening the pack-strap over his forehead, raised up with a heavy sack of pemmican on his back and the puppies on his arm. They wriggled and squirmed all the time, and A-mí-kons nearly laughed out loud when he saw how proud and foolish the mother-dog looked as she trotted along beside the Indian, never once taking her eyes off that squirming puppy-sack, and never once noticing where she stepped.

"There is Ki-niw, the War Eagle," said A-mí-kons' mother, pulling his ear partly to attract his attention but mostly so that he would not laugh aloud. "If he had shot at you when you lay day-dreaming on the dam, you would not be here now. He never misses what he shoots at."

A-mí-kons watched the Indian whose name was War Eagle, and he liked him, for he carried a larger load of skins and pemmican than he allowed his Squaw to carry. And doubtless he was a good hunter too, for after all of the other Indians had carried their packs and canoes below the dam, Ki-niw had scarcely unloaded half of his. It must have been almost evening before his canoe was all unloaded, and A-mí-kons was startled from some thoughts which little beavers always have by hearing an Indian down below the dam calling, "Ki-niw, are you coming?"

When the little beaver looked there was Ki-niw above the dam sitting on his last load, but his Squaw was nowhere in sight.

Ki-niw got up and walked a short distance until he could see the other Indians below the dam in their canoes ready to start, then he answered, "Yes." "Where is Jiń-gwak?" called back the other Indians (Jiń-gwak, meaning Pine-tree, was the name of Ki-niw's Squaw). "She has gone into the forest to set a partridge-snare, I think," Ki-niw answered without a smile.

"A partridge-snare, what is that?" said the beaver, and down he dived under the water, splashing it all over his mother with his tail as he went under. He swam up stream and got among the rushes near the shore, where he looked out and listened. Scarcely had he raised his head when he heard the faintest little cry.

Then the Squaw came out of the forest and straight down the river bank to the water's edge. There she stooped down and opened her arms and out of the folds of her buckskin garments she brought a tiny Indian babe. How rosy and soft and beautiful it was, and how gently the mother bathed it in the cold fresh water as though she thought it would break; and now the little beaver was not afraid any longer but wanted to touch the tiny thing with his warm soft fur.

As the happy Squaw laid the naked babe next to her warm mother's breast and folded it about with her garments and started to walk away the beaver heard her sing this pretty song:

"O my little Blue Bird,
O my little Blue Bird,
Mother knew that you would come,
Mother knew that you would come.
When the ice lets go the river,
When the wild-geese come again,
When the sugar-maple swells,
When the maple swells its buds,
Then the little blue birds come,
Then my little Blue Bird came."

The young beaver had never heard anything one half so sweet. He had never seen anything one half so beautiful as that little babe. He forgot that he was a beaver, and came right out of the water and listened and looked and trembled with joy.

As the Squaw came near Ki-niw, her husband, she stopped singing, and said, "My husband, I have brought you an Ojibwa warrior." When Ki-niw heard this he arose from his seat and turned and looked at her and went to meet her. Together they lifted the garments from her breast and peeped in at the new-born babe. "Yes, I see you have," he said. He gently covered up the babe again, and took the Squaw's face in his hands and

kissed her. Then he stooped down and lifted onto his own strong back both his pack of pemmican and hers, and side by side they started around the dam.

But Ki-niw heard a slight noise behind him, and whirling around saw the little beaver almost at his feet. "Tang whist," hissed his arrow.

As A-mí-kons walked after the Squaw he was humming to himself:

"O my little Blue Bird,
O my little Blue Bird,
Mother knew that you would come,
Mother knew that you would come.
When the ice lets go the river,
When the wild-geese come again,
When the sugar-maple swells," — — —

and he scarcely heard the hissing of Ki-niw's arrow,—but suddenly he felt sick. It grew dark, he could scarcely breathe; he thought that he had fainted, or anyway he must be asleep.

But it grew light again, and O! his Father, the Sun, was so warm and close to him; and the beaver hummed with perfect joy this little song:

" When the sugar-maple swells,
Then the little blue birds come.
Yes, my little Blue Bird,
I have come, A-mí-kons has come."

Over and over again for days he softly sang to himself this song, and when finally he awoke he found that his warm soft fur was touching the Indian babe. Presently the Squaw came and took them both in her arms and kissed the babe and stroked with her hand the little beaver's fur.

Thus the beaver had become the companion of the little babe whose name was soon to be Ji-shib.

CHAPTER TWO

In Which The Beaver Learns To Know An Indian When He Sees Him, And Also Other Things Indian

II

AS the days and moons flew by into the past the little Blue Bird grew rapidly.

One day A-mí-kons tried to think of all the things which had happened since he fell asleep, and since he awoke.

And then it came back to him, as though from a dream, how they went below the dam, he and the Blue Bird and the Squaw and Ki-niw, and how they floated down Chippeway river in their birch-bark canoe; and how they stopped on shore at night, and Ki-niw helped his Squaw build her wigwam, while the other Indians sat around and smoked and left their Squaws to work alone; and he remembered too that all of the Indians and Squaws and children came into the wigwam that night and sat down around the fire and smoked a pipe. Every one ate

some venison and ducks which Ki-niw had shot that day along the river, and each one had to eat all that was placed before him. Afterwards they were all silent until an old Indian thanked the Good Spirits for their successful Winter-hunt — which the canoe loads showed had been very good. Soon the old Indian spoke to little Blue Bird (just as though he could understand) and told him that he must be a good baby, so that he would be a good man. He must become a skillful hunter like Ki-niw, his father. He must become a great warrior such as his grandfather and father were. Then they were all silent and smoked again until the oldest Indian in the wigwam gave a name to Blue Bird, saying, "His name shall be Ji-shíb," the Duck; and so it was, — but A-mí-kons and the Squaw always thought of him and always called him little "Blue Bird."

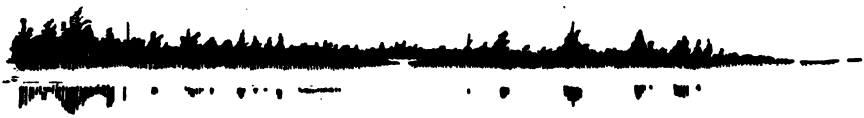
The beaver laughed when he remembered that the Blue Bird just lay still and slept all that first evening while the people were in the wigwam and while they talked and smoked; but Ki-niw and the Squaw were there and some day they would tell him all.

A-mí-kons knew all this for he was wrapped around the Blue Bird and his soft fur touched the baby and kept him warm.

As he thought of all these things he remembered about winking at the Sun and bumping his nose and splashing water on his mother with his tail. Instinctively he tried to wriggle his tail again, and then for the first time he noticed that it was gone. "But what good is a beaver's tail anyway?" he said with beaver-like philosophy. "Of course it is nice to sit on when you are tired. It is good to splash water with, and it is good to spank down the mud with when you are building the dam, but that is all. It is not pretty; in fact it is plain-looking. It would not help to keep the baby warm, for it has no fur on and is all covered with scales. A beaver likes his tail because it is his, and he always takes it with him. I really do not believe that a beaver ever would cut his own tail, but yet," said the beaver-philosopher, "I would rather have my little Blue Bird than a string of tails."

A-mí-kons also remembered that they floated farther and farther down the Chippeway river until they came to an orchard of sugar-maples, where they stopped for one whole month while the Squaws made maple-sugar. And when the leaves began to peep out on the trees the Indians took down their wigwams and packed their canoes with pemmican and furs and sugar, and floated on and on down the river. By and by they stopped and unloaded their canoes again. They carried all the things on their backs through the forest and across a beautiful green meadow, and there in a small creek they again packed them in their canoes and started on. Soon the creek got wider and wider still, when all at once their canoes glided out on a shining lake with a name so long that the beaver could not pronounce it.

It was a beautiful large lake with forests of pine holding it in, and all along the shore there were now and then white-barked trees of the canoe-birch, which looked like cracks of sunlight among the dark green pines. Two arms of the pine-



covered shore reached out toward the middle of the lake and nearly took hold of hands, but yet the lake stole through between their finger-tips, so that, in all except the driest weeks of the Summer, the light-running canoes glided smoothly over the pebbly bottom from one part of the lake to the other.

Ji-shíb lived with his father and mother and grandparents on the east shore of the lake. All around them were other wigwams, for in the Summer a large village was built up there, although in the Autumn the place was nearly deserted, groups of four or five wigwams going away together to hunt buffalo and moose and beaver during the Winter months.

The moon of flowers, which we call the month of May, was far along before Ji-shíb's mother had her Summer wigwam built, and every one had seen every one else, and learned who had died, and who had been born since the village broke up at the beginning of Winter.

Childhood of Ji-shíb'

During all of the Summer-time little Ji-shíb was the pet of the wigwam. At first he lay among the soft furs at the farther side of the wigwam and slept. Each forenoon and afternoon his mother or grandmother tied him into his board cradle for an hour or so, and there he slept just the same. Sometimes strings of buckskin were fastened to both ends of his cradle, and it was hung up across the wigwam where the puppies could not get tangled up with the baby, and where he could swing and swing.

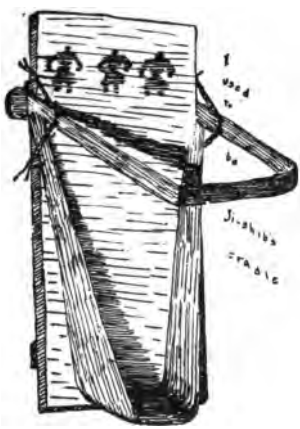
In the Fall of the year he used sometimes to cry, if they forgot to tie him in his cradle, for that was such a nice place to sleep, all tucked and tied in so that he could not roll off and wake himself up; and there the soft white moss under him and around him did not make him half so hot as it did to lie on the furs.

At times the Squaw took Ji-shíb in her canoe and paddled across the lake to the west village, and sometimes when she was not in a hurry she let the canoe turn around until it was almost in the

trough of the shallow waves, and there she held it with her paddle while the waves sang breathless little songs against its side, and gently rocked it to and fro. And once Ji-shib', the little rascal, said "coo-coo" and "goo-goo" in Indian. The happy mother caught him up and whispered half aloud in his ear, "O, my little Blue Bird, mother feared that you would grow up to be an old Squaw because you live so much in the wigwam, but I see now that you are to be a great orator, for you hear the voice of the Spirits as they speak to you in the wind and in the water, and you answer them."

Late in the Autumn they all went far up Chippeway river and then through the forest, and built their warm Winter wigwams at the edge of a small prairie. In the Spring, back they came again with their canoes piled high with pemmican and furs.

One day in the early Summer Ji-shib' missed his cradle and he cried, then he missed it the next day and the next. It was years after that before he learned where it had been. There leaning up



against a tree near the wigwam it had stood for days and days, telling to every one who passed this simple tale: "I used to be Ji-shíb's cradle, but he has outgrown me now, he is almost a warrior."

The second Summer and Winter, and the third and fourth Summers and Winters passed as had the first. During the warm Summers Ji-shíb played about the wigwam. He had a little bow and arrow, and little pails made of birch bark; and every Summer there were a great many playful puppies with tails to pull, and there were dozens of children like himself. All the long Summer the smaller boys ran around with nothing on except a string of shells around their necks, and some of them had not even that; but most of the little girls wore buckskin shirts without sleeves.

Some days they all played hide and seek among the wigwams and the maize and the forest near the village. Some days they waded in the lake and floated their tiny birch-bark canoes, and sometimes they played war-party. Part of the boys would be Sioux and part

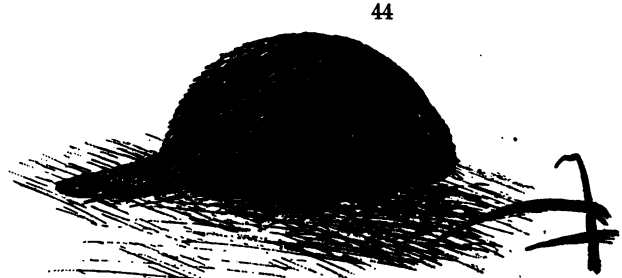
Ojibwa, and in some way it always turned out that the Ojibwa warriors were victorious — even though a part of the Sioux had to die, and get scalped, and then crawl off as though not seen and later join the victorious warriors with a loud war-cry. Once when Ji-shíb led his warriors against the Sioux, their war-cry made the dogs bark and duck under the wigwams with their tails between their legs and the hair bristling straight up on their backs — not knowing whether they were the most frightened or angry.

The little girls built play wigwams of birch bark, and played that they were Squaws with babies of their own. One day when they were all playing grown-ups Ji-shíb came home to his play-Squaw and wigwam dragging an innocent rebellious puppy by the hind leg. He left it outside by the door of the wigwam, and walked in with much dignity, and sat down in his place. By and by he said in lisping baby-Indian: "Squaw, I just killed a great big bear, go skin him, I am hungry."

The obedient little Squaw went out silently only to find half a dozen bears, like the one Ji-shíb had killed, having a tug-of-war over an old moccasin.

Nearly every evening Ji-shíb's grandmother told him stories. Neither he nor the beaver could remember half of them, but there was one which the beaver never forgot because it was about beavers.

"Many, many Summers ago," the grandmother said, "beavers climbed trees like squirrels and ran swiftly on the ground like foxes, but they did not eat ducks and birds, they ate nothing except wood — like willow and young poplar and birch. They had large white teeth which Manido had given them to eat the wood with, and they used to gnaw down many more young trees than they could eat. So Manido sent the wood-pecker to tell them not to cut down more trees than they needed for food, because very soon the wood-pecker would have no trees in which to build her nest.



"Still they kept on cutting down the trees, and Manido sent the eagle to tell the beavers that they must obey or he would fasten a great load to them which they could scarcely drag along, and thus the Indians could easily catch them and kill them; but still they cut the trees down. Then Manido became angry, and sent a disease into the beavers' tails. Their tails swelled and swelled and burned, and all of the fur dropped off. In order to stop the painful swelling and burning they dipped their tails in the water, and soon they saw that the water helped to hold them up, so that they were not so heavy to drag around. Now, as may be imagined, the beavers and ducks had always been good friends, because beavers did not eat ducks and ducks did not eat either beavers or wood, and, being good friends, the ducks told the beavers how to grow hind feet like their own, and before long the beavers became expert swimmers. But still they gnawed down trees which they rolled into the rivers and creeks to make dams. They used their big flat tails to spank down

and smooth off the mud with when they made the dams. When Manido saw all this he said, 'The beaver is the wisest animal I have made. If I am ever in trouble, I shall send for the beaver to help me out.' "

After learning this story the little beaver was very proud of his ancestors, and Ji-shib received his first lesson in the wisdom of the beaver — a fact which he never attempted to dispute. In time he came to know that the beaver was the wisest of all animals.

CHAPTER THREE

In Which Ji-shíb Becomes A Little Medicine-Man

III

WO Summers after this, when Ji-shiḃ was six years old, his father was one day coming home along the forest trail near the village, when his keen eyes sighted the little fellow trudging toward him with his bow and arrows. Ki-niw stepped aside into the bushes, and, as Ji-shiḃ got opposite him, purposely broke a dry stick with his foot. As the stick cracked aloud the little fellow stopped suddenly with his eyes toward the bush behind which his father was hidden. When Ji-shiḃ turned half way around, and could see neither friend nor wigwam, his fluttering hunter-heart gave way, and he ran back in the direction of the village. The father waited

until he thought that the boy was out of sight down the trail, when suddenly he heard the "tang" of a tiny bow-string, an arrow came gliding at him through the bush, and he peeped out to see the little hunter turn away again and run home like a deer. That night after the children were all asleep in the village, Ki-niw walked among the wigwams and told the story over and over again, although he said that he had never seen a child run half so fast.

In the Autumn, after the maize and squashes and beans were all gathered from the gardens and hidden in holes, like large pockets in the ground, and after the Indians had gathered their harvest of wild rice, something unusual happened in the life of Ji-shib́ — he joined the Grand Medicine Society. This Society is one which all Ojibwa boys and Indians, and most of the girls and Squaws used to join before the whitemen came to America. And this is the way Ji-shib́ became a little Medicine-Man.

One night two old Indians came into the wigwam and sat down and smoked. They were famous Medicine-Men. One of them was as tall and straight as a spear-handle. His hair was black, with scarcely a streak of white in it, and yet he was very old, for long deep creases were in his face. The other man was small and wrinkled, and his hair was almost white, but he was as agile as a squirrel. Ji-shíb looked with reverence on these men, for they could do almost everything.

They could make it rain or make the wind blow. They could prepare "good medicine," so that a hunter could shoot as many deer as he wanted, or catch plenty of fish. If they desired, they could prepare "bad medicine" to make a person's mouth crooked; and if anyone was sick, they could cure him. If an Indian fell in love with a young Squaw, and wanted to marry her, these old men could make "love medicine," wrapped up in a small piece of buckskin, and if the Indian-lover did with it exactly what the old men told him to do, the young Squaw would want to marry him.

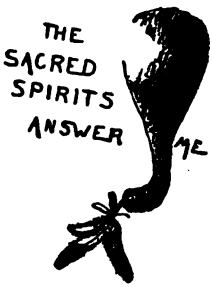
They could also talk to the Spirits — both the Good Spirits and the Bad Spirits; and because these Spirits knew them, they told the Medicine-Men what to do and also how to do it.

The little boys and girls never played jokes on Medicine-Men, for these wise old men could see them, though they might be far away in the forest. They could see them, though they were in their wigwams with their eyes shut and fast asleep; and if the little boys and girls were caught at it, the Medicine-Men would make their mouths crooked, or make their fathers and mothers die. So when an old Medicine-Man came into another Indian's wigwam, every one was good to him and listened to what he said.

By and by the tall old Medicine-Man, sitting there in the wigwam, threw a little of his tobacco in the fire, then he took a medicine drum from under his deerskin blanket, and began to drum on it with a stick. Presently he stopped drumming, and told Ji-shíb about the

drum which he had. "This drum," he said, "was given to us by Manido, the Sacred Spirit. When it is used the Sacred Spirits, who guard over the Medicine Society, listen to what is said to them and do what is asked. If any one is sick and this drum is used by his side, it will help to drive out the Bad Spirits which make the poor man sick. Ji-shib'," he said, "after four nights you will join the Medicine Society, and this sacred drum will be used. You will then be a little Medicine-Man, but there will be many more things which you can learn about the Sacred Spirits and their medicines, so when you join the Medicine Society again, as you will in after years, and become a bigger Medicine-Man, this drum must be used again, for the Sacred Spirits will then listen to what you say."

The old Indian stopped talking, and the other old Medicine-Man held up a gourd with kernels of corn inside of it, and rattled it. Soon he stopped rattling, and told Ji-shib' how Manido had given them the rattle also. He said that it



was even more powerful than the drum to drive away Bad Spirits from a sick man, and that in the Medicine Society the rattle must be used with the drum when songs were sung to the Sacred Spirits.

When the last old Medicine-Man stopped talking, there was an awful silence in the wigwam. Certainly the Sacred Spirits must be there, because it was so breathless and so still. Little Ji-shiḃ felt his heart thumping as though it were trying to get out and run away. He never felt so lonely and homesick in all his life. He began to fear that he and every one else in the wigwam was dead.

The beaver was just as much impressed as Ji-shiḃ was, and wondered what made him feel so strange in the great dreadful silence. Of course it must be that the Sacred Spirits were there, and that the Medicine-Men and the father and mother of Ji-shiḃ, and even Ji-shiḃ himself, could see them. How sharp their eyes were, and how acute their ears were, to hear the voice of the Sacred Spirits,

when all that he could hear was just a terrible stillness that hurt his ears, and he wished — how he wished — that it would stop.

The fire snapped a burning splinter into the lap of the good Squaw, and she brushed it away with her finger-tips. Only then did Ji-shíb have courage to look up, and when the beaver saw his eyes he felt all right again. Then the old Medicine-Men drummed and rattled, and the drummer sang a song, to which the drum and rattle beat time, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, sometimes louder, and again almost dying away. He sang to the Sacred Spirits about medicines, and then he sang to Ji-shíb what the Sacred Spirits whispered back to him to say. He sang each sentence over and over again until Ji-shíb could think of nothing else. This is what he sang:

"Hee, ya, ho, ho, ho-ho, ho!

I hear the Spirits speaking to us,
I hear the Spirits speaking to us.

The Spirits say there is plenty of medicine
in the Medicine-Wigwam,
The Spirits say there is plenty of medicine
in the Medicine-Wigwam:

Hee, ya, ho-ho, ho-ho, ho, hoo, ho-ho!"

As soon as he finished this song he kept silent, and that strange dreadful stillness filled the wigwam.

After a short time, which seemed a thousand moons to Ji-shiḃ, the Medicine-Men again sang to the Sacred Spirits, and the drum and rattle sounded. After they had finished singing for that night, and had smoked, the Medicine-Men had something to eat, and then they past out into the darkness and went home.

That night, as Ji-shiḃ lay asleep, a beautiful young Indian seemed to come down through the smoke-hole in the top of the wigwam and look at him and say: "I bring you medicine to make you live. You will find it in a beaver skin." The young Indian then raised the buffalo-skin flap of the door, and went out. Ji-shiḃ awoke, and saw only the skin at the doorway flapping, and above his head a thin gray smoke weaving lazily from the fire and passing out toward the stars.

For four nights those old Medicine-Men came to the wigwam and sang Sacred Spirit songs. Each night they sang

ten of them; and each night, while Ji-shíb slept, the young Indian seemed to come and tell him that he would find medicine in the beaver skin. Sometimes during those awful silences, between the songs, he could hear drums and singing in other wigwams, for others besides himself were going to join the Grand Medicine Society.

On the morning after the fourth night—that great day when Ji-shíb was to become a little Medicine-Man — he went out to look at the medicine wigwam, which the Squaws had built the day before. There it was, a long series of small poles stuck in the ground and tied together in the middle. They somewhat resembled the springs of giant rabbit snares. The wigwam was all open to the sky, but the sides near the ground were closed in by tamarack boughs leaned against them. And down the middle of the wigwam, from one end to the other, as far as he could have shot his arrow, were buffalo skins, and moose skins, and deer skins hanging up; and there were moccasins, and leggings and

shirts of buckskin, and there were two packs of beaver furs, and skin bags full of wild rice and others of maize. And there were other things, too, hanging up, and they were all given by his father, and other fathers whose children were to join the Society; but if grown-up Squaws and Indians joined, they gave the things themselves. They were all to be given to the old Medicine-Men who had sung those four past nights, and who would help on this greatest of all days. Down through the middle of the wigwam there were four posts set in the ground, and one of them was where Ji-shíb was to stand and sit, and where all of the Indians and Squaws would dance around him.

By and by things were ready, and all at once every wigwam in the village seemed to burst open and let out a swarm of people. The Indians had their faces painted. They had eagle feathers in their hair, and buffalo-hoof rattles on their ankles, and all of the Indians and Squaws had animal skins in their hands or tucked under their belts.

Some had beaver skins, some fox skins, others skins of hawks, and some few had black and tan skins of baby bears. Some of the Indians had as many as four of these skins. These were the sacred medicine bags in which was the sacred medicine; Ji-shíb was also to have one of them with medicine in it, so that when he got sick he would not die.

After they had marched into the long medicine wigwam, at the door toward the rising sun, they marched around and around inside, and then sat down. Every one smoked, and ate wild rice in dog soup, and the old Medicine-Men spoke. They told the other Indians, who were listening, always to live quietly, never to steal from their friends, never to misuse their friends, never to lie to their friends, and never to kill their friends, but always to do right, and then they would live long, even so that they would walk with two sticks, and the snows would whiten their hair, and if they did all of this, other people would respect them. Little Ji-shíb resolved to do all of those

things, and so live to be very old and respected, and perhaps then he could become a great Medicine-Man and a War-Chief.

Ji-shíb could not begin to remember how many times they marched around, and sang songs, and danced, and smoked, and ate, but he could not forget how funny the Squaws looked when they danced. They danced as though their feet were tied together, and jumped up and down stiff legged. It made their bodies shake, and the beads around their necks flopped like the ears of a running dog, and their medicine bags dangled and flopped, and they looked very funny, even to Ji-shíb. But the Indians (and Ji-shíb was glad that he was an Indian and not a Squaw), they filled him with pride. They stepped so lightly on the ground, and held their heads so high, and pranced along the way fine horses prance to-day; and now and then they said, "Hee, ya, ho-ho-ho, ho-ho, ho!" and looked this way and that, and Ji-shíb could not take his eyes from them.

Soon he and his father and mother got up and stood by his post, which had a band of red paint around it, and the two old Medicine-Men came to them, and drummed and rattled and sang songs. Then he had to sit down by the post with his face to the rising sun. Soon four old Medicine-Men came prancing up toward him, and one of them held a medicine bag, a beaver skin, in both his hands, and pointed it at Ji-shíb; and as he came up closer, the Medicine-Man said, "Ya, ho, ho, ho, ho-ho!" and thrust the beaver skin at him. Two other Medicine-Men stood behind Ji-shíb with their hands on his shoulders, and when the beaver-skin bag was thrust at him he felt himself tremble.

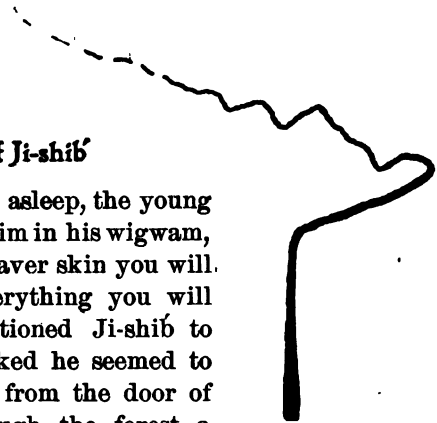
The second old Medicine-Man came toward him, and thrust the beaver skin at him, and he trembled again.

And the third Medicine-Man did the same, and he trembled still more.

Then the fourth old Medicine-Man took the beaver skin, and approached him saying, "Ya-ho, ho, ho, hoo, hoo!" and making the beaver skin move in and

out as a snake runs. Then he went backward, and came up and thrust the skin at Ji-shíb, and then he went back and came up again, and all of the time he said, "Ya, ho, ho, ho!" and all of the time he made the beaver skin look like a snake wriggling. When the Medicine-Man came toward him the fourth time the beaver skin actually touched Ji-shíb, and he trembled a very great deal, and fell forward on his face. All of the Medicine-Men gathered around him and said, "Ya, ho, ho, ho-ho, ho-ho-ho, hoo!" many, many times.

Little Ji-shíb thought that the Sacred Spirits must have come into him when the sacred bag touched him, for he felt so strangely happy and warm. The Medicine-Men raised him up, and put in his hands the beaver skin with sacred shells and sacred medicine in it. And thus it had come true, what the beautiful young Indian who came into the wigwam at night had told him, for now he had sacred medicine in a beaver skin. He looked at the beaver skin, and found that it was little A-mí-kons, who had been with him ever since he was a babe.



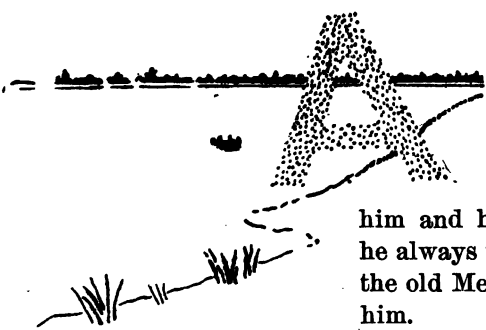
That night as he lay asleep, the young Indian again came to him in his wigwam, and said: "In the beaver skin you will find medicine for everything you will need." Then he motioned Ji-shíb to look. And as he looked he seemed to see a pathway leading from the door of the wigwam out through the forest, a path at first straight, then turning and winding, becoming very crooked and broken and lost in the forest.

Ji-shíb understood in his childish way that the path was like his life would be, first, straight and easy, later, crooked and difficult to follow. But the Sacred Spirits were with him, and his medicine bag was in his hand with the medicines given to help him out of all difficulties. The vision vanished, and he awoke and found himself standing in the middle of the wigwam. The fire was out and he was cold, so he lay down close to his good mother, and wrapped her buffalo-skin blanket around him and went to sleep again.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Which Ji-shib́ Uses His Medicines

IV



ALWAYS after that Ji-shiǵ knew that the Sacred Spirits watched over him and helped him, and he always tried to do what the old Medicine-Men told him.

One day when he was eight years old there were several small boys playing in the lake. None of them was yet large enough to wear clothes in the Summer, so they swam and dived in the water, like frogs, half of the time. The first thing Ji-shiǵ knew, the Bad Spirit of the lake caught his leg, and doubled it up in his giant hand, and it hurt. The Bad Spirit pinched his leg, and pulled him down

under the water, and then let him come up again, but he did not let go of his leg. Then he pulled him down again. When Ji-shíb was being pulled down the second time he thought of his medicine bag which lay on the shore, and that if he could only get his hand in that bag, he would give the Bad Spirit some medicine to make him let him loose. When he came up again, he made a great desperate kick and struggle, and got away and swam to the shore, but his leg was lame and hurt him. He took some sacred tobacco from his medicine bag, and threw it to the Bad Spirit of the lake, and after that he never caught hold of Ji-shíb again. Of course, sometimes when he was going to swim far in the lake, he threw tobacco into the water for the Bad Spirit before he went in.

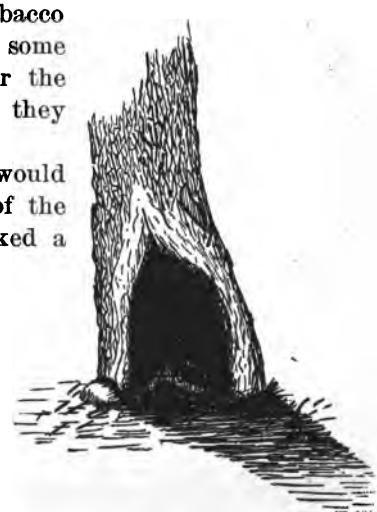
But nearly every Summer that Bad Spirit caught some little Indian boy, and dragged him down into the lake, and sucked out all of his blood, and, after days and days, laid him on shore at night dead and bloodless.

Childhood of Ji-shiḃ́

Once the Bad Spirit did not bring a boy back at all, but ate him all up down in the deep water.

Late in the next Summer Ji-shiḃ́ was out in the forest, and an unknown bird called at him from a tree, and then flew away and called from another tree. Ji-shiḃ́ followed it. It kept calling, and flying away, and calling again. Soon it grew dark with clouds, the Sun went out, and it rained, and the great Thunder Birds called and called in loud and fearful voices. Ji-shiḃ́ saw a hollow tree, and he crept in it, and sat down on the dry leaves. The Thunder Birds screamed and called all through the forest, so Ji-shiḃ́ took his sacred tobacco from his medicine bag, and threw some of it out of the hollow tree for the Thunder Birds, and by and by they ceased calling.

It seemed as though it never would stop raining, so he crawled out of the tree, and started home. He walked a



long way, and got hungry and tired, but he could not find the village. It began to get night, and little Ji-shíb was almost afraid,— when there, right by his side, was the hollow tree again. He looked in and saw his bow and arrows which he had forgotten when he started out before, so he crept in, wet and tired, and soon fell asleep.

While he slept he dreamed again of the beautiful young Indian, who came to him that night saying, "Look." When he looked, there were many shadows moving swiftly over the ground, and he raised his eyes and saw a great flock of ducks flying over the trees. They all flew straight over, and all in the same direction, and the Indian told him that they were flying to the fields of wild rice which grew in the river flowing from the lake.

The young Indian said again, "Look." And Ji-shíb looked, and saw a fat rabbit sitting under a bunch of clover, eating the leaves all wet with rain.

Again the Indian said, "Look;" and as he looked, there were berry bushes, and the berries were ripe and good to eat.

When he awoke in the morning he did not at first know where he was, but soon he remembered, and felt hungry and cold. He crawled out of the tree in the bright sunlight, and yawned and stretched his arms. There were dark shadows moving swiftly over the ground, and he heard the whistle of ducks' wings in the air, and ducks were flying right above the tree tops. He then remembered about his dream, and knew that in the early morning the ducks went to eat wild rice in the river, so he knew where the lake and the village were.

He took his bow and arrows and medicine bag, and followed the direction which the ducks had taken. After a little time he came to an opening in the forest, and saw a rabbit sitting there, just as the Indian had showed him. He stood very still, and strung his bow, and put an arrow on the string, and pulled it back,— "tang!" said the bow string. The frightened rabbit jumped up and ran, and then it stopped, fell over backward, stretched out its hind legs, and lay still.

Ji-shiḃ was very proud, for never before had he shot anything alive, not even a little bird. He took the rabbit by the hind leg, and dragged it along as he had seen his father drag home a wolf the day before. Such a heavy load made his arm ache, so he stopped to rest; and there he saw many berry bushes like those the young Indian had showed him in his dream. He ate and ate the raspberries until he heard his father call his name. And when his father saw him, he ran to him and hugged him; but when he saw the rabbit which Ji-shiḃ had shot, he put the little boy down out of his arms, and said, "Huh! a big hunter! I will not kiss a hunter; come, bring your rabbit to the wigwam; Squaw is very hungry." So Ki-niw started on—all of the time laughing to himself—and Ji-shiḃ followed him into the village, dragging his first game at his side.

That evening Ji-shiḃ's father and mother made a feast, called a boy's feast, which the Ojibwa Indians always make when a boy kills his first game. They invited the people then at the village,

and they all had some of the rabbit to eat. The old hunters made speeches, and praised Ji-shíb for killing a rabbit when he was so young. They said they knew that he would become a great hunter when he grew up; and some of them told of their own hunting experiences.

One old hunter, who was a very strong Indian, once shot an arrow so hard that it passed through one buffalo and into the heart of another one, and they both fell dead together.

Another old hunter, who was a great joker, said that that was nothing, — he was stronger than that, — for once he shot an arrow through three buffalo, and then the arrow stuck so far in a tree that he could not pull it out.

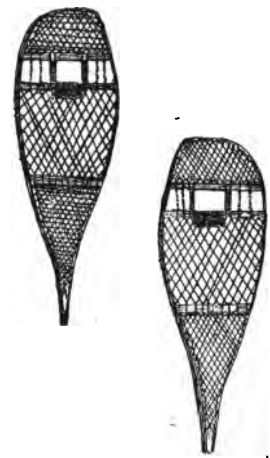
All of the Indians laughed at this story, and one of them asked the old hunter what kind of medicine he used when he shot three buffalo at once. They all laughed still more when he said; "I used the same kind of medicine which little Ji-shíb uses; ask him."

Ji-shíb was obliged to tell his story then. After he had told it — how he

stopped the thunder, how he dreamed about the ducks and the rabbit and the berries, and that they all came true,—every one knew that the Sacred Spirits were with him.

When the old men went out of the wigwam they patted him on the head, and the Squaws used to tell their boys to do and to act like Ji-shíb.

The following Winter while they were gone from the lake, hunting in northern Wisconsin, they had no snow for a long time. The ground was frozen so hard that an Indian made a noise walking even with soft moccasins. The game was quite scarce that Winter, and got very wild, because it could hear the hunter so far away. Even Ki-niw often came home at night without any game, and soon hunger stole into the four wigwams of the Indians who were together. At last they had to kill three of their dogs to eat. Then it snowed very hard. When it ceased the hunters went out and killed two moose and an elk, for they



could not run in the deep soft snow, though the hunters could run rapidly over the snow with their snowshoes. After that they had plenty to eat, but the sun soon came out very warm and melted the surface of the snow, but almost immediately it froze over so that there was a thick crust on the top, which would hold up a moose as well as a man. The hunters could not kill any more game, and soon they were starving.

Every night Ji-shib's faithful father fixed his hunting medicines, and sang and prayed to the Sacred Spirits, but during the day he could not kill anything for food. One night he did not come home at all, and every one in the wigwams went to sleep without having eaten anything that day or the day before.

In the night Ji-shib awoke, and prepared his hunting medicine as he had seen his father do, and he sang and prayed to the Sacred Spirits, that he and the others might not starve.

Afterwards, while he slept, the beautiful young Indian came into the wigwam and told Ji-shib: "Tomorrow you shall

eat a bear;" and Ji-shíb looked, and saw a path leading into the forest. Far out from the wigwam it turned into a small marshy place, and stopped; and then the young Indian slowly faded away.

Next morning, when the Squaw left the wigwam to enquire after her husband, Ji-shíb took a flint tomahawk, and his own bow, and some hunting arrows of his father, and slipped away unobserved. After a while he saw a path in the forest, and this he followed to a small marshy place, but he did not see any bear. All at once the snow broke through under him, and he found himself in a hole up to his arms. He looked down at his feet, and there he saw the head of a sleeping bear, lying close to the ground, and he remembered that hunters sometimes killed sleeping bears in their holes in the Winter, where they lie buried until Spring. He struck the bear twice between the eyes with his tomahawk, and when he saw that it did

not stir he knew that he had killed it, so he crawled out of the hole and ran home breathlessly. His father was just starting out to find him, having come home with only one young beaver to eat.

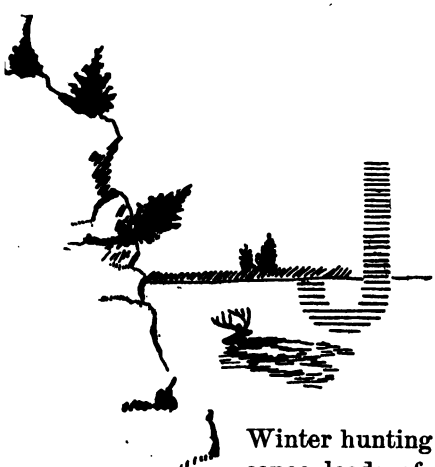
That day, after the hunters dragged the heavy bear to the wigwams, another boy's feast was given for Ji-shib́, because that was the first bear he had killed.

In a few days the crust melted on the snow, and then there was plenty of game to be had, but the people never forgot how Ji-shib́ saved them from starving, and he never forgot the beautiful young Indian who always came to him in his dreams, and he often wondered who he was, and which of the Sacred Spirits sent him.

CHAPTER FIVE

In Which Ji-shib́ Learns How To Prepare For War

V



I-SHIB had now become a tall slender boy. In the Spring after he had killed the sleeping bear he helped pack up the canoe, and all of the Indians left their Winter hunting grounds with larger canoe loads of skins and pemmican than they usually had, for they were preparing a war party to go against their fierce enemy, the Sioux, in the early Autumn. At such times the Indians desired to leave in the village food, and skins for clothing, to supply the Squaws and children and old men who remained behind; there must also be a large supply of moccasins and bows and arrows and tomahawks for the warriors themselves.

By the time they reached their Summer village at the lake, after having stopped and made maple sugar, their canoes were piled high with provisions.

Early one morning as they paddled down Chippeway river they suddenly came upon a large deer swimming across the stream. On one side the river bank was steep and slippery, and the deer was obliged to come to the shore at a particular place. Ji-shíb and his father and mother, were far ahead with their canoe, and prepared to shoot the animal.

The father selected for Ji-shíb an arrow with a straight and slender shaft and a sharp flint point. Ji-shíb knew very well where to shoot in order to kill the deer, for many times he had been shown where a deer's heart lies, and he knew that when an animal's heart is pierced it soon loses its courage and dies. Then the father selected an arrow for himself, and waited for the boy to shoot. The deer swam swiftly with only its head

and large horns above the water, and Ji-shíb, watching it, trembled with excitement. As soon as the deer came into the shallows, so that it could touch bottom, it began to bound forward,—half swimming and half running. Soon its body was entirely above the surface of the water, and the arrow shot away from Ji-shíb's bow string and struck its victim. The deer bounded into the air, and then ran splashing and plunging through the water and up the river bank into the forest.

When the father saw where the arrow struck he did not shoot. He knew that a deer will run as long as it has breath in its body, but it is bound to stop soon when it has an arrow through its heart.

As the deer passed up the river bank, and over the low ridge out of sight, it waved its tail like a handkerchief, as much as to say, "Good-bye, Indians, I'm in quite a hurry, good-bye!"

They quickly turned the canoe to the shore, and there on the sands were blood-stains. The father pretended to be busy

with the canoe until Ji-shib' ran up the bank following the tracks; and then from over the ridge came the boy's cry of victory, for there was his first deer dead at his feet.

When the other Indians came down the river in their canoes, the boy's feast was again celebrated in honor of Ji-shib's first deer.

The village was very busy that Spring and Summer getting ready for war. The Squaws planted their maize and beans and squashes. After planting their gardens they frequently tanned skins all day long, and sewed moccasins in the evening by the light of the wigwam fire. The young Indians hunted and fished a great deal. Many of the old Indians and Squaws were absent from the village making arrow heads, while the other Indians built new canoes, and made bows and arrows.

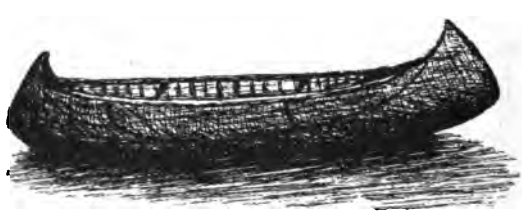
In the month of June, which Ji-shib' called the month of strawberries, he went with his father to get birch bark to make a canoe. They went some distance up

Chippeway river, and there found a large tree, straight and smooth, without a limb anywhere near the ground. They cut a circle around the tree near the roots, and another one far up the trunk, and then they cut a straight line down the side of the tree from one circular cut to the other. Just like a boy in the country who is almost undressed by the time he gets to the swimming-hole, so the old tree had nearly half disrobed by the time Ki-niw finished cutting through the bark. The bark sprung away from the tree trunk, on both sides of the long straight cut, as though it had done it every Summer for fifty years. Then Ki-niw loosened the entire bark by pushing his hands between it and the trunk, and there was a gentle swishing sound as the large section fell on the ground at his feet.

When they had taken it home Ji-shib's mother sewed it together so that it would be large enough to cover the canoe frame. She knew exactly how to sew it, first holding it near the fire until it got soft and would bend like leather, and afterwards punching holes in it with a bone bodkin.

She finally fastened the pieces together with large strong thread made of the slender roots of the spruce tree.

While she was doing this, Ji-shíb helped his father prepare the frame of the canoe. This frame, made like the skeleton of a great fish laid on its back, they placed on top of the bark on the ground; then they gathered the bark up on both sides of the cedar ribs, and all three of them helped tie it along the top of the frame. Next a strip of cedar, which we call a gunwale, was bound along the upper edge of the canoe, and four crosspieces fastened in, in order to protect the bark and give form to the canoe. It was turned bottom up, and Ji-shíb and his mother melted pine pitch and smeared it over all of the seams so that they would not leak, poking the pitch in with a flaming stick. The canoe was then completed. They carried it to the lake, and it floated like a bubble.



Ji-shib' and the other Indian children knew that about two days' journey from the village, away up on the east fork of Chippeway river, there was a quarry and workshop where the tribe got its rock to make arrow heads and war clubs. But he had never seen the place, nor had it very often been seen except by the old Indians and Squaws who worked there.

One afternoon late in the Summer a canoe came around the bend in the lake shore, and those who saw it knew that it belonged to old Má-kwa, Ji-shib''s grandfather. He had been at the workshop all the long Summer, and had brought back a great many arrow heads carefully wrapped up in little bags of buckskin. These they carried from the canoe to the wigwam, and before the sun set that evening every wigwam in the village, and every wigwam in the village at the west end of the lake, had received its share of each sort of arrow heads.

Before this Ji-shib' had helped his father in making arrow shafts. Of course he did not do much in so delicate an undertaking as the making of war-arrow shafts,

and after he had done all he could, Ki-niw worked over them until they were smooth and dry and straight. He cut a notch in one end of the shaft to fit the bow string, and in the other end he cut a much deeper notch in which to fasten the arrow head. He also tied and cemented feathers on the back end of each shaft so as to guide it straight,— as a blackbird uses its tail.

In the evening, after Má-kwa had come, they were all sitting outside the wigwam, and Ki-niw handed Ji-shíb an arrow shaft and an arrow head, and motioned him to fasten them together. Ji-shíb went to his place in the wigwam, and, getting a ball of deer sinew, soaked it in hot water. Next he put the arrow head in the deep notch of the shaft and bound it in firmly with wet sinew. His father looked at the finished arrow, and said, "Yes, my son, that is well done, but we are not going to hunt deer with these arrows, we are to hunt the Sioux."

After that they all sat around the bright little fire and fastened on the arrow heads, Ji-shíb helping his father.

They did not fasten them on firmly, as Ji-shíb had done with the one he made—which was really a hunting arrow — but they fastened them on so lightly that if one entered the flesh of a Sioux, that dreaded enemy could not pull the arrow out without leaving the cruel barbed flint head in the wound, to cut and dig and make it bleed.

In three days old Má-kwa took his Squaw and returned to the workshop. After he had gone they found that he had left at the wigwam his deer-horn chipping tools, so Ji-shíb went with his father to take them.

At the workshop, where they made the arrow heads, there were many old Indians whom Ji-shib had never seen before, as they were from other villages. The ground was strewn with chips and splinters of flint and quartz rocks. His grandfather and old Nes-se-win had a small pile of chips just outside of their wigwam, where they worked together, while inside the wigwam was a pile of thin slabs of rock about as large as an Indian's hand.

Old Nes-se-win laid one of these large flint slabs on a piece of buckskin which was spread on the palm of his hand, and held it down firmly with the tips of his fingers, while Má-kwa placed the point of his chipping tool against the flint, and struck it a quick rebounding blow with a wooden mallet. Every time he struck it, a chip flew off. Nes-se-win kept turning the flint in his hand over and around, and Má-kwa kept chipping it away, until finally it was an arrow head or spear point.

It was almost as though Má-kwa struck with his mallet in order to beat time to his singing, for he sang nearly all of the while in a low pleasant voice, and his songs kept perfect time with the strokes of his mallet. Sometimes he sang to Nes-se-win over and over again this simple song:

"Nes-se-win holds the flint,
While Má-kwa chips it out.
Nes-se-win holds the flint,
While Má-kwa chips it out."

And then again he sang to the arrow head. As he was chipping the point

sharp and slender, he sang to it this worker's song, which made Ji-shíb's blood boil, and before he knew it he was singing it with his grandfather:

"I give you the war-bird's eye
To see the enemy's heart;
I give you the war-bird's eye
To see the enemy's heart."

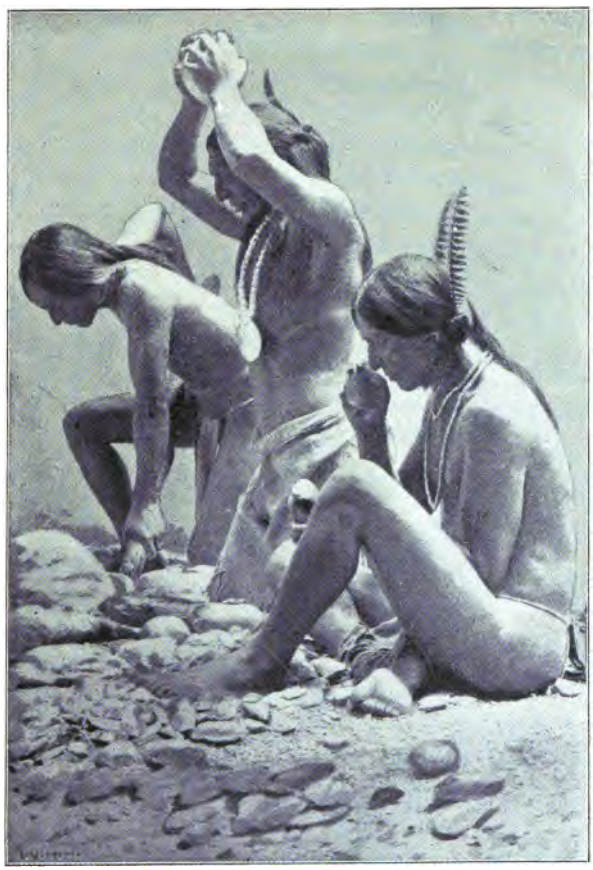
When he came to chip the two sharp barbs at the base of the arrow head, he changed the song, and sang:

"I give you the war-bird's claws
To tear the enemy's heart;
I give you the war-bird's claws
To tear the enemy's heart."

Everywhere about them in this workshop the old Indians were busily at work. While looking around him at the singing groups of workers, Ji-shíb saw a Squaw come up from her canoe at the river bank with a heavy pack on her back. When she opened the moose-skin pack it proved to be full of slabs of flint like those in the grandfather's wigwam, and from which they chipped out the arrow heads and spear points.

The next day Ji-shib went with his father and grandmother a short distance farther up the east fork of Chippeway river to the quarry site. There in the river bank were several pockets of quartz and flint rocks massed together like squashes in a great basket. Some of the old Indians pried the rocks out of the ground, others broke them up with large stone hammers, while still others chipped these broken pieces of rocks into crude slabs the size of one's hand, and these the Squaws carried away to the workshop for the chippers to make into arrow heads and other weapons.

When Ji-shib and his father got back to the village from the quarry, the Squaw had gone with several others down into Little Manomin river to begin the Autumn harvest of wild rice, which is the common grain food of the Ojibwa. After remaining at the village a day to distribute the arrow heads which they brought in from the workshop, they took a great number of duck arrows, and



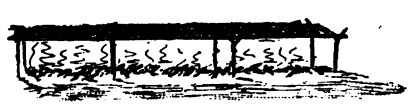
"Some of the old Indians pried the rocks out of the ground,"
From *The 15th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology,*
(Washington, D. C.)

paddled out through the lake into the river, to shoot duck and other water fowl in the wild rice fields, while the Squaws were gathering the grain.

That evening the sacred dog feast was held. They killed and cooked a white dog, but before they ate any of it they asked the Spirits to keep off all storms until the grain was gathered. Before each mouthful Ji-shib' and his father, and every one who ate, threw a part of his food into the fire, so that its Spirit might ascend to the Spirits above as a feast,—for Spirits like to eat as well as Indians do. Why not? Every one eats when he is hungry, if he can find food; and eating makes him better-natured.

Next morning the harvest began. Ji-shib''s mother and another Squaw gathered their canoe full of wild rice from the tall waving stalks which grew higher than their heads in the water of the river.

When they came to the shore with the canoe full of grain, Ji-shib' helped take the rice out and spread it to dry on a rack over a slow fire. It was his duty



that first day to keep the fire burning. But he was careful not to have it burn too high, or it would have burned up the rack and grain. When the grain was dry enough, it was carried to the threshing-hole, and, after spreading a deerskin in the hole, they filled it with grain. Then his father stepped into the threshing-hole, with new moccasins on his feet, and there he danced and stamped around until he had threshed the hulls all off the kernels.

Ji-shíb's mother emptied the grain and hulls from the deerskin into a large birch-bark tray. This she held in front of her, all of the time shaking it in a peculiar manner, when soon the hulls were shaken to the top of the kernels and out over the edge of the tray on the ground. All that was left in the bottom of the tray when she finished shaking it was clean grain, ready to cook and eat.

They remained three weeks gathering wild rice, and the several wigwams each had many skin bags full of delicious grain.

But this is not all they did. Every night they danced or feasted or told stories, and nearly every night they did all three things. During the day the Indians shot wild fowl in the rice fields, because all they did in the harvest was just the threshing of the grain. The children carried rice and kept the fires, and some of the larger boys at times went hunting with the Indians. But the Squaws worked all the time.

Ji-shíb played war party a great deal. Since he had seen the old Indians making war arrows and heard their songs, he had twice dreamed of going to war with his father. And since he heard one night at the rice fields that when he was a babe the Sioux had killed fourteen men from his own village, he wished very much that he was old enough to go to war and avenge the death of his tribesmen. He knew, however, that he was not old enough. It would be fully ten years more before he would be a warrior, with a chance to fight and die like a brave Ojibwa.

Within a week after they returned to the village from the harvest, the old Indians and Squaws had all come from the quarry and workshop; and the warriors in both villages at the lake had nearly one hundred arrows each. Their tomahawks and war clubs and shields were all made, and each warrior had ten or twelve pairs of strong new moccasins to wear while making the long journey westward to the Mississippi river, the Sioux country.

The Ojibwa Indians from the small villages on the Chippeway and Wisconsin rivers, and from Bad river at Lake Superior, had come to the village to join the war party. When each Chief reported the number of warriors whom he had, it showed that there were in all about eight hundred.

Everything was ready, the evening of the last day had come, and they joined in a great wild war dance. The yells and songs and speeches of the Chiefs and warriors stirred and aroused the courage of every one. Each Indian there, who was not too old or too young to go to war, was made to feel brave and courageous, and

resolved to join the war party when it started next day.

Although Ji-shíb was much too young to go to war, or even to go so far from home, yet he felt the surging hatred of a brave warrior when he heard how many times his people had been killed by those deadly snakes, the Sioux. But he had great respect for their cunning and bravery, for that very evening had he not heard how a large band of his people once attacked a small Sioux village whose few warriors fought until they died, although they knew that they could not defeat so large a party?

It was nearly midnight before they went to sleep, and each wigwam was packed full of warriors.

While Ji-shíb slept, he thought that the beautiful young Indian who came to him so often in his dreams, came and softly pushed aside the deerskin at the door and peeped in. Then the young Indian beckoned to him to come. He awoke outside the door, and by the dim gray light of early morning saw several persons darting about in the dense fog from the lake.

Suddenly the dogs at the farther end of the village began to bark, and instantly every cur within hearing took up the cry.

Ji-shib's grandfather came hurriedly out of the wigwam and his quick eyes saw enough at a single glance. Before Ji-shib could speak or even think, his grandfather yelled, "The Sioux! the Sioux are here! the Sioux!" As an answer came the Sioux war cry from every part of the village. Ji-shib had once been greatly frightened when the Thunder Birds called and yelled during a fearful tempest; he had once run from his father all the way to the village when he heard a wounded mother-bear roar and howl. But when he heard that war cry his blood turned to ice, his legs gave way under him, and he sank trembling and helpless on the ground. It was as though every tree, yes, every leaf and every grain of sand, had an Evil Spirit in it which had been wounded and yelled for vengeance.

The startled Ojibwa Indians poured out of their wigwams, each one a warrior stripped and armed for battle. Immediately came their answering war cry—a

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cry which Ji-shíb had often used in playing war; but not until then did he know what that cry really meant or how awful it was. He could not speak or move.

Many of the Squaws and children ran to the lake shore to escape in the canoes, but the Sioux had pushed all the canoes far out in the lake. They had hoped to drive the Ojibwa people to the lake shore and kill them there. But the barking of the dogs disclosed the presence of the Sioux before they had discovered that the village was full of warriors, for they certainly had not intended to attack a village with four times as many warriors in it as they themselves had.

Ji-shíb was dragged inside the wigwam, where there were several Squaws and children huddled together awaiting what might happen. Three times arrows were shot into the wigwam from the outside. One of them struck the grandmother in the arm, but when she saw that it was an Ojibwa arrow she laughed and pulled it out and dressed her wound.

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Childhood of Ji-shíb'

Once a young Squaw crawled into the wigwam and fainted near the fire. Her clothes were nearly all torn from her, and there was an ugly bleeding wound in her naked back. Her poor little babe was crushed and dead in her arms.

Suddenly a fiendish Sioux yelled his war cry in their very ears; a Sioux knife ripped a long slit in the wigwam cover opposite where Ji-shíb was curled up by his mother. Almost instantly there followed a fearful moan outside, and something heavy fell against the wigwam and afterwards to the earth. All was silent for a few seconds, then the awful dread was broken by the Ojibwa cry of victory, and it was the voice of the good old grandfather. He peeped in at the opening which the Sioux had made, and immediately darted away, carrying a fresh Sioux scalp in his hand.

At first there were yells and sounds of battle all around the village, but soon they became scarcer and fainter until the war cries came only from the deep forest. By and by they died away entirely.

About noon Ji-shíb's father looked anxiously in at the wigwam, and, laying a bundle of buckskin at the grandmother's side, hastened away again. She looked at it, and groaned. Then she unrolled the bundle, for it was the breechcloth, leggings and moccasins of brave old Má-kwa, the grandfather. As she came to the tomahawk and bloody knife wrapped up in the garments, she put her arms around Ji-shíb and hugged and hugged him. Without saying a word to any one she took the weapons of her dead husband and went out into the forest; when she returned at midnight she carried a Sioux scalp in her hand, but no one knew where she got it.

Gradually the warriors came back to the village, but it was nearly a week before the last returned. Among these was Ji-shíb's father, and he said that scarcely a Sioux who attacked the village would be able to reach his own wigwam to tell the sad tale of their ill-fated war party.

The grandmother made a bundle of her husband's clothing and carried it about with her for a year. It seemed as

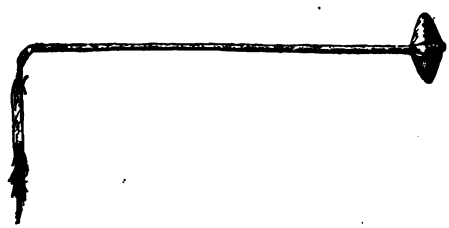
though nearly half of the Squaws in the village carried such a bundle on their backs to show that they mourned the death of a son or brother or husband. After all of the warriors had returned; that is, all who ever did return, the great scalp dance was held. They flaunted their enemies' scalps, and danced and yelled until every one was tired out. The warriors told of their experiences in the battle, and some one was always ready to tell how brave each dead warrior was whose bundle of garments some sick-hearted Squaw was at that moment carrying on her back.

But the thing which Ji-shíb remembered best, and which he never could forget, was the closing speech of a great War Chief, who spoke as follows:

"Hear my voice, ye heroes! On that day when our warriors sprang with shouts on the dastardly Sioux, when they killed our Squaws and our babes, my heart burned to take vengeance. And here on my breast have I bled. See, see my battle wounds! Ye mountains, tremble at my yell! My foes shall die. They shall fly over the plains like a fox. They shall shake like a leaf in the storm. Their lost bones shall be picked by the vultures.

Five Winters in hunting we will spend while mourning our dead. Our youth will then have grown to manhoood for the battle path trained, and our days we will end like these warriors. Ye are dead, noble warriors! Ye are gone, my brother, my fellow, my friend! But we live to avenge you. We hasten to die as you died."

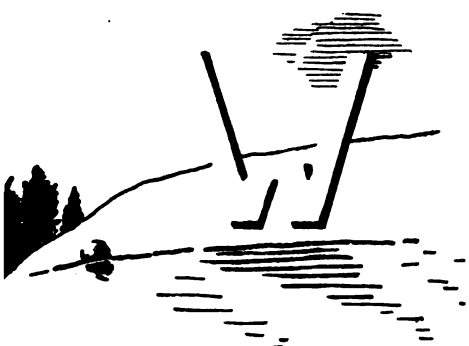
Ji-shib knew that even when five years were ended, still he would not be old enough to go to war. But scarcely a week passed that he did not wish time would fly faster, so that he could avenge the death of his good old grandfather, who saved their lives from the Sioux Indian at the wigwam.



CHAPTER SIX

In Which Ji-shib´ Outgrows His Childhood

VI



WITHIN three years after the great battle at the Ojibwa village, scarcely a visible sign remained to tell the sad story. The Squaws no longer carried on their backs the clothing of their dead. In fact, most of the widowed Squaws were married again, and little children whose parents had been killed were adopted by other families.

Ji-shiḃ was now thirteen years old. He was almost as tall as his mother,

and, while not nearly so strong as she, he was an expert trailer and hunter of small animals. By means of his arrows, rabbits, porcupines, raccoons, ducks and partridge often found their way into the family kettle.

One day in the early Summer he went with his father and another Indian away to the South, into the country where the Fox Indians lived, to dig medicine roots in the prairie.

As they paddled slowly down the river, a number of blue jays were screaming and scolding in the forest a short distance from shore. It was evident that something unusual was occurring, for the Indian learns as much from the flight and various cries of birds as from anything about him, and those blue jays exclaimed clearly enough:

"Something is wrong; come up and see!"

They paddled rapidly and silently down the stream a short distance, and then they cautiously crept up the bank and peered among the trees.

The jays were screaming above and around a dense thicket of paw-paw bushes, now and again darting into the thicket out of sight. But the Indians' eyes could tell them nothing, so they used their next best means of discovery.

They went back to the edge of the river, and crept softly up stream until they got where the wind blew from the paw-paw bushes toward them.

When they had again crawled up to the top of the river bank, the wind blew over to their noses this unmistakable tale:

"I have just come from that clump of bushes, and, besides there being a great plenty of unripe paw-paws there, you will also take notice that the dense foliage is concealing a buffalo."

They knew that the buffalo must be wounded, or it would never have hidden in such a place.

Ji-shib' remained where he was and watched the hunters as they flitted through the forest from one tree trunk to another, until they could approach the animal from opposite sides. They glided along without a sound, and yet during a mo-

ment in which Ji-shíb was watching his father, the other Indian moved the distance of several trees.

The Indian strung his trusty bow and shot an arrow into the thicket, when a large buffalo bull staggered into view. It was weakened by hunger and loss of blood. Another well-directed arrow caused the wounded animal to totter and sink to the earth. In skinning the buffalo, the hunters were greatly astonished to find a Sioux arrow shot nearly out of sight in its body.

They were alarmed, for they were alone, far from home, and, although in a country which the Ojibwa Indians, with no apparent dispute, had for some time claimed as their own, yet there was a Sioux arrow, and the buffalo which carried it was shot not more than three days before.

They gradually breathed more freely, because the Sioux were nowhere discernable. They tracked the animal back, and soon came to signs of at least one hundred more. The tracks led directly from the river below where the canoe was.

On crossing the stream they found the pointed moccasin tracks of two Sioux Indians who had not crossed the river from the west side, and although they had skinned a buffalo there, and camped there at night, yet they had not built a fire. All of this, while showing that they were brave hunters, also told plainly that they were crafty Indians and careful not to be discovered.

Ji-shíb and his father paddled slowly down the river, while the other Indian followed the trail of the buffalo herd. After going down stream half a day, they came to a shallow ford where the herd had re-crossed the river, and there they waited. The tracks told them that the buffalo were no longer chased or frightened. It was also plain that the animals had crossed the stream only the previous evening.

Just at sunset the other Indian came to the river with a fresh skin and a load of tender meat. He had killed a fat buffalo cow which had left the herd as it moved on through the thin forest, and remained behind with her calf which had its leg broken.

Seeing that the herd was so near them, and that it would not be much farther to reach the prairie where their medicine roots were, if they followed the tracks of the buffalo, the Indians decided to camp all night where they were.

In the early morning they put their ears close to the ground and heard the tramp of the buffalo. About noon they saw from a low hill in the open prairie, small dark spots slowly moving some distance ahead of them. The Indians remained hidden behind the hill until they could approach the buffalo along a narrow creek bed. Here they could proceed rapidly, for the bushes and small trees concealed them, and, besides, the wind blew directly from the herd toward them, so that the buffalo could not discover their presence by the scent.

As they cautiously came out into the prairie from the creek bed, they were struck dumb with surprise. There, up the creek, only the distance of two arrow shots, were the two Sioux hunters, also cautiously entering the prairie from the creek bed, and also intent on shooting buffalo.

The two parties discovered each other at the same instant. There they were, face to face, hated enemies. Their tribesmen had hunted and killed each other for generations. Each Indian yelled his war cry, and in an instant had thrown off everything except his breech-cloth, moccasins and weapons. Instinctively each brave hunter leaped toward the enemy, for there was neither time nor place to stalk the foe.

Yet it was clear that each party was hunting and not warring. The Ojibwa knew that the Sioux were alone, for they had previously seen their tracks. The Sioux knew that the Ojibwa could not be on the war path, for children never went to war. So, scarcely had they started before they all stopped. After a word of council between the two Sioux hunters, they both laid down their weapons and raised their empty hands above their heads. Ji-shib and his father and the other Indian did the same. Thus these two parties of Indians, who could not understand a word of each other's language, agreed on peace.

The Sioux came forward first, one of them holding a pipe in his hand. All five met half way between where they had left their weapons, and there they sat down on the prairie and passed the pipe from one to the other. No more sacred promise of peace was ever made than that of smoking the peace pipe among the Indians of North America.

When they had finished, they all went back to their weapons, and, passing over the hill, ran down upon the herd. Each Indian shot a fat buffalo cow; and Ji-shib became very excited as he stood half way down the hillside and saw the remainder of the animals vanish from sight around a turn in the valley.

The cow that the other Indian shot ran quite a distance, followed by a large fierce bull. Even after she fell he stood over her, bellowing and pawing up the earth. Repeatedly did Ki-niw and the other Indian try to get to the cow, but each time

the faithful old bull charged upon them, ever loyal to his shaggy Squaw. At last the two Indians separated, one coming up on either side, and they succeeded in shooting the fierce bull.

When they came to the other cow to skin her, there was a calf lying asleep beside its dead mother. They caught the calf, and told Ji-shíb to blow in its nostrils. He filled his lungs with air and then blew into its nose as one would blow up a football; then the little calf, not being able to smell anything except the breath of Ji-shíb, followed him around as it would its own mother.

The Sioux Indians skinned their two buffalo, and signaling a peaceful goodbye, followed the fleeing herd and were not seen again.

The Ojibwa Indians took their buffalo skins and went in the opposite direction to seek their medicine roots. In the evening as they made their camp in the open prairie, the young motherless calf lay down beside them, and during the night slept its poor hungry little life away.

The next Spring Ji-shib' and another boy lost a tame porcupine which they had kept a year, ever since it could eat alone. It wandered away during their absence from home, and had been gone several days before they knew about it. They tracked it through the forest, then along a creek, and found where it had eaten in the night at the edge of the water. Finally, after following it every step of its long wandering journey, seeing where it had slept and eaten in the trees, and where it had scratched in the dirt, they came to a lake with high jagged cliffs along one side. In some way their cunning failed them there, for trees were scarce, and some of the rocks were covered with soft green moss like rugs, and others were entirely bare, even of fine sand.

In vain they searched for tracks back and forth along the foot of the cliff. They proposed to climb up the rocks a distance until they could look over from a projecting point, and there watch for the little rascal to waddle out of his cliff retreat in search of food.

They had scarcely gained their outlook when their sharp sight caught the reflection of an eagle in the water. As they cautiously raised their eyes they saw a female eagle approaching over the lake; and they could plainly see that she was carrying something in her claws. Very soon she flew into the cliff some distance from them, and they heard the eager cries of a nestful of hungry young birds.

A tame porcupine was tame indeed, as compared with a caged eagle, so as soon as the mother-bird was out of sight again over the forest trees, the boys carefully picked their way up the cliff.

It was very difficult climbing part of the distance, but in places they could almost run. At times one pushed the other up over his head, and he, from his higher position, let down the end of his breech-cloth and hauled the lower boy up. But they were expert climbers, and at last, thanks to frequent but niggardly ledges and occasional balsams and pines which found a prisoner's fare in the narrow cell-like crevices, they arrived at the nest. Two young birds scarcely a week old were asleep within full sight of their position.

It was decided that Ji-shíb should climb down the cliff to the nest and bring back the young eagles tied in his breech-cloth slung over his back, while the other boy should try to shoot the old bird if she returned. Ji-shíb had nearly reached the nest, and his companion watching the tops of the forest trees over the lake reported everything all right, when suddenly a frightful cry of alarm and anger sounded in his ears. The eagle, coming to her nest from the back way, had not seen the boy until she came fully on him. A young grouse dropped from her startled claws to the ledge near him, and the eagle turned to fight. Not until then had she seen Ji-shíb. He was the dangerous enemy. He was the one who would rob her of her darlings. Forgetting her fright, and screaming her fierce cry of anger, she whirled again and again and charged on him.

At first the well-directed arrows kept her from touching Ji-shíb, but soon they were gone, none of them having penetrated her lapped armor of feathers.

She became bolder, and twice struck the boy a cruel stinging blow with her heavy wing. Then Ji-shíb, with his side lying close in against the rock, his left hand clutching a crevice above his head, his legs supporting him from two narrow ledges below, drew his knife from his breech-cloth, and, fastening his determined eyes on the bird, waited his chance to strike. He could not reach out far, for he dared not lean away from the rock, but soon, emboldened by her evident success, the brave war eagle came to sink her cruel claws in his side. Then he struck. Her fierce cry died half uttered, and she fell away, carrying the knife sunk deep in her breast. They listened as the heavy body fell crashing down the cliff, breaking branches and knocking off loosened pebbles, until it reached the bottom.

But both of the boys knew that Ji-shíb was now in greater danger than before, for every moment they expected the eagle's mate to come in response to her calls, and there they were, both of them without weapons.

The boy above hurriedly gathered what stones and sticks he could, while Ji-shíb passed over the space to the nest. There he could at least have a little room to dodge and step about when the bird attacked him.

But for some reason the bird did not come, and the little eagles were tied in their new cradle, and there they swung while Ji-shíb retraced his dangerous path. Far below them they found the dead mother-bird, and lugged her home for her beautiful feathers.

Outside their wigwam in the village they built a platform in a tree, and on it constructed a wigwam-cage of willows for their new pets. When the boys had nothing else to do, they very well spent their time trying to catch enough small game to fill up the rapidly growing stomachs of those two young eagles.

During the entire Spring a change was slowly coming over Ji-shíb, and yet he scarcely knew it. It was a steady, gradual change of both body and mind. He was outgrowing his childhood.

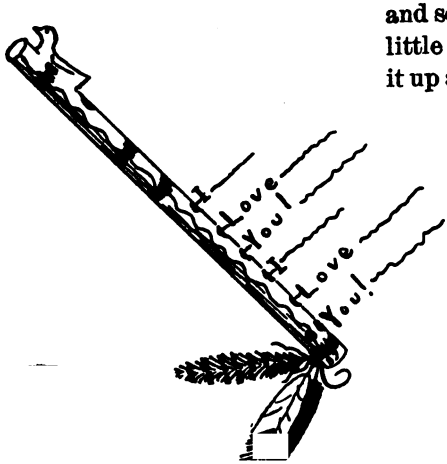
The day after he built the eagle cage it was the common knowledge of the village that one of his playmates had that morning gone alone into the forest to begin his fast. All Ojibwa boys fast, when they are as old as Ji-shíb was now, in order to dream of some animal or plant which shall be their special Guardian Spirit or Totem henceforth.

Ji-shíb was not much surprised therefore at what occurred at noon. As his birch-bark dish was handed him there were soft black cedar coals in it, instead of food to eat. He knew what to do with them, so without saying anything, or even looking at his father or mother or grandmother, he blackened his face with the coals. Then he took his bow and arrows and beaver-skin medicine bag, and went away into the forest back of the village. There he must stay alone four days and nights, without food or wigwam. If he was able to do that, there would be little doubt but that he would grow up through his boyhood and young manhood into a worthy hunter and warrior and husband.

Toward evening it began to rain, so he sought the shelter of the friendly old hollow tree where several years before he had once slept when he was lost. He wished very much to know what the Sacred Spirits would send him as his Guardian Spirit.

That first night, alone in the forest, brought to his restless dreams only the home-life of the village. He seemed to hear the barking of the dogs, and now and then the call of an Indian, and the plaintive music of the lover's-flute, which at that time of the year was heard almost nightly in the village.

But the next night, as he slept hungry and lonely in the hollow tree, he saw his old friend, the beautiful young Indian, come to him and beckon him. Ji-shib looked, and saw his good mother come out of her wigwam. She was smiling and seemed very happy. She carried his little baby cradle in her hands, and leaned it up against a tree. He could faintly hear her say, "My little Blue Bird is fast becoming a warrior." As the mother passed into her wigwam the



young Indian said to him: "Thus you outgrew your babyhood." While speaking, the beautiful Indian gradually changed his shape and size, and in a few moments he was turned into a soft-furred beaver. Then he vanished.

Next day Ji-shíb was very hungry. Twice he went to the creek to drink, and all day long he thought how the Indian had changed to a beaver. He had never done that before.

That night the young Indian came again while Ji-shíb slept, and said to him: "Don't you know me?" Then he quickly laid aside his beautiful buckskin garments, and, sure enough, he was a real beaver. "Look," he said. And Ji-shíb looked, and saw himself sitting in the hollow tree with his face blackened, and the beaver said: "Thus will you outgrow your childhood." Ji-shíb awoke, but could see nothing except the green shoots on the leafy ground in front of the tree.

He was more and more hungry that next day, and yet he was getting accustomed to the feeling of hunger, so he walked aimlessly about in the forest.

Everything seemed well-fed and happy. The squirrels and birds were busy hunting things to eat, to be sure, but the lad felt certain that none of them had been so long without food as he had. His wanderings at last brought him to the clear warm sunlight at the wild rice fields. There the birds were flitting in and out, to and from their hidden nests, and Ji-shíb sat down to watch them.

A bobolink flew from the reeds up into the air above the nest of its brooding mate, and there it hung and fluttered and sung. What a wild, passionate, happy outburst of melody that was. It was like the song of a dozen birds all singing at once—a song so fast and frantic and furious, and yet so sweet. It often sounded like the melodious dropping of water. Many times the songster flew to its mate and then back again into the air, as though to try to outrival its last, happy, crazy, sweet tangle of notes.

If Ji-shíb had put his new, half formed thoughts and feelings into words,

and if the bobolink could have understood Ji-shib as he that day dimly learned to understand the bobolink, it might have heard the youth softly singing:

"O little bird,
  Songbird of the reeds,
I hear thy song of love,
Thy song of wooing.

"I heard thy sweet Squaw-mate
When she piped her answer back;
  I heard her soft-toned voice,
Telling she loved thee.

"O pretty reed-bird,
  Teach me thy wisdom,—
For thou surely art wiser
Than any Objiwa."

That evening, that fourth and last evening of his fast, Ji-shib fell asleep very early in the old oak tree's hollow wigwam. He was tired and exhausted. The beaver came to him in his restless dreams that night, and took him by the hand and led him far away. He led him into the forest to the old beaver dam on Chippeway river, and Ji-shib knew that he was born there, and that there the beaver first found him.

He saw that the beaver had many times saved him from being injured, that he had saved his life from the Bad Spirit of the lake, and from starvation in Winter. And Ji-shíb knew, from the many wonderful things which the beaver said and did, that that little animal was wiser, many times wiser, than he himself, and even wiser than the old Medicine-Men were, for was it not an animal, now living as a Sacred Spirit, which told the Medicine-Men how to do the marvelous things they did?

Ji-shíb felt that the beaver was not only wiser than all Indians, but that he was even wiser than all other animals; he knew everything. And he would teach Ji-shíb everything, if he was only worthy and good. And so Ji-shíb felt in his dream that the beaver was his Guardian Spirit, though at times he came in the form of a beautiful young Indian, and sometimes, even, he was not visible at all.

Lastly, in his dream that night the beaver showed him a wigwam, not like the wigwams in the village, but a pointed

one, and, raising the door-flap, told Ji-shíb to enter. There in the wigwam was a young Indian girl, and when he spoke to her she answered him, but he could not understand her words. She allowed him to sit down beside her, and he noticed that she was very beautiful. And yet he did not understand what it all meant, he knew only that she was beautiful. The beaver said to him: "Thus will you outgrow your boyhood, and grow into manhood."

Gradually the beautiful girl faded away, and Ji-shíb turned to look at the beaver which was sitting up beside him. Slowly the beaver lay flat on the ground, and Ji-shíb awoke, curled up in the hollow tree, looking at the beaver-skin medicine bag lying at his feet. And then he knew surely that the beaver was his Guardian Spirit. It must be the Spirit of little A-mí-kons, for had notA-mí-kons found him at his birth? Had not the beaver's fur wrapped him up during his babyhood? Had not A-mí-kons always been his medicine bag? A-mí-kons, the little beaver, had always kept him and always would.

The fast was ended, and Ji-shib', with his beaver-skin bag in his hand, left the old tree in the forest, and started slowly homeward. Under the pine trees, past the great shady maples, stopping to pick the bright red winter-green berries, lingering a moment at the wild rice fields to hear the liquid song of the bobolink, together they went, Ji-shib' and the beaver, on, on to the village. And thus they were always together, for the beaver watched over Ji-shib' and kept him, and Ji-shib' knew that the Spirit of the beaver was at all times stronger, and better, and wiser than he.

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